

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 /037 W
-----019612 081855Z /53

R 081746Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6542
INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, GW
SUBJECT: STRIKE VOTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY - LATEST
ROUND IN THE PRINTERS' STRIKE

REF: (A) BONN 03948; (B) BONN 03579; (C) BONN 02766;
(D) DUSSELDORF 351; (E) DUSSELDORF 360; (F) USBERLIN
0526

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SUMMARY: THE WAGE DISPUTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY AND
THE DISPUTE IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY ARE CONTINUING.
OUTCOME OF THE STRIKE VOTE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY, WHICH
WAS HELD MARCH 7 AND 8, IS EXPECTED FOR MARCH 9. IF
75 PERCENT OF THE UNION MEMBERS IN THE METAL INDUSTRY
VOTE FOR A STRIKE, WHICH IS VERY LIKELY, IT WILL MOST

PROBABLY BEGIN SOMETIME NEXT WEEK. THERE IS ALSO NO SETTLEMENT IN SIGHT IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY, ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE NEWSPAPERS APPEARED MARCH 8. THE PRINTERS' UNION REFUSES TO ACCEPT FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PRESIDENT STINGL AS A MEDIATOR IN THE DISPUTE. STRIKE FUNDS OF THE PRINTERS ARE NEARLY EXHAUSTED, BUT DGB HAS GIVEN ASSURANCES OF FINANCIAL HELP FROM THE SUPPORT FUND. END SUMMARY.

1. THE STRIKE VOTE FOR METALWORKERS IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA (NRW) AND NORTH BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG (NBW) BEGAN YESTERDAY (MARCH 7) AND WILL CONTINUE TODAY (MARCH 8). THE UNION NEEDS "YES" VOTES FOR A STRIKE FROM 75 PERCENT OF THE WORKERS WHO WOULD BE INVOLVED IN A STRIKE. SINCE A NUMBER OF WORKERS WILL NOT CHOOSE TO VOTE AT ALL, IG METALL ALWAYS NEEDS A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF STRIKE VOTES FROM THOSE WORKERS WHO DO VOTE. EARLY RETURNS FROM WUPPERTAL INDICATE THAT 98.9 PERCENT OF THOSE VOTING WANT A STRIKE. JOERG BARCZYNSKI, IG METALL'S PRESS SECRETARY, EXPECTS AN 80 PERCENT OVERALL APPROVAL FOR A STRIKE, BUT THE FINAL RESULTS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL LATE THIS EVENING.

2. IF, AS EXPECTED, THE VOTE IS FOR A STRIKE, THE FOLLOWING WILL OCCUR ON THURSDAY, MARCH 9:
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- 10:00 HRS (09:00 Z) -- THE BARGAINING COMMISSIONS FOR NRW AND NBW MEET TO DISCUSS THE VOTE. THE BARGAINING COMMISSIONS WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IG METALL'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. THE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE FOR A STRIKE.

- 15:00 HRS (14:00 Z) -- THE IG METALL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETS IN FRANKFURT.

- APPROX. 20:00 HRS (19:00 HRS Z) -- THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ANNOUNCES ITS DECISION.

3. IN BARCZYNSKI'S OPINION THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WILL DECIDE ON A STRIKE TO BEGIN SOMETIME NEXT WEEK. THIS WILL GIVE THE EMPLOYERS A FEW DAYS IN WHICH THEY COULD RESUME TALKS. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE EMPLOYERS WILL DO THIS. IF THE DISPUTE IS NOT SETTLED THIS WEEKEND, THE STRIKE WILL PROBABLY BEGIN ON MARCH 14 OR 15, ALTHOUGH SOME UNION LEADERS BELIEVE IT WILL BE BETTER TACTICS TO BEGIN THE STRIKE MONDAY MORNING (MARCH 13).

4. THE OVERALL BARGAINING SITUATION WAS COMPLICATED
BY IG METALL'S ANNOUNCEMENT LATE LAST EVENING THAT A
6.7 PERCENT SETTLEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH SMALL
FIRMS IN ESSEN EMPLOYING A TOTAL OF 4,300 WORKERS, A

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INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
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SMALL PART OF THE OVER ONE AND A HALF MILLION WORKERS
WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE STRIKE. THIS SETTLEMENT
PLACES PRESSURE ON IG METALL FOR A SETTLEMENT AT LEAST
OVER 5 PERCENT AND PREFERABLY IN THE 5.5 - 6.3 PERCENT
RANGE.

5. THE NATIONWIDE PRINTERS STRIKE (REF A, C, F)
ENTERED ITS LATEST PHASE WHEN THE EMPLOYERS ENDED THEIR
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48 HOUR WARNING LOCKOUT. THE UNION CONTINUED THEIR
SELECTIVE STRIKES IN DUSSELDORF, WUPPERTAL, KASSEL
AND MUNICH. NONE OF THE BASIC ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED
AND NO SETTLEMENT IS IN SIGHT. JOSEF STINGL, PRESI-
DENT OF THE BUNDESANSTALT FUER ARBEIT (FEDERAL EMPLOY-
MENT SERVICE) IN NUERNBERG, WAS SUGGESTED AS A MEDIATOR,
BUT PRESIDENT MAHLEIN OF THE PRINTERS UNION STATED
THAT THE UNION WOULD NOT THINK OF ACCEPTING STINGL.

6. THE PRINTERS ARE FINANCING THE STRIKE WITH THEIR
BADLY DEPLETED FUNDS (REF A, F). THE KEY QUESTION IN
TERMS OF THE STRIKE'S DURATION IS: "HOW MUCH LONGER
CAN THE PRINTERS' FUNDS LAST?" THE DGB (GERMAN
TRADE UNION FEDERATION) HAS MADE STATEMENTS ABOUT
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PRINTERS (A DGB UNION), BUT
LITTLE OR NO MONEY HAS ACTUALLY BEEN GIVEN TO THE
PRINTERS. DGB SOURCES BELIEVE THAT THE PRINTERS WILL
BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO A SETTLEMENT WHEN THE PRINTERS'
OWN FUNDS ARE NEARLY DEPLETED.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: A STRIKE IN THE METAL INDUSTRY
APPEARS TO BE ALMOST CERTAIN, ALTHOUGH A WEEKEND
OFFER WELL OVER 5 PERCENT BY THE EMPLOYERS COULD PREVENT
THIS. THE PRINTERS' STRIKE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE
INTO NEXT WEEK. THERE WILL BE INCREASING PRESSURE FOR
A "POLITICAL" MEDIATOR TO STEP IN, BUT FEW NAMES ARE
IMMEDIATELY APPARENT FOR WHAT WILL LIKELY BE A
DIFFICULT AND THANKLESS JOB.
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